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Letter dated 20 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia of 19 December 2000, regarding the dissemination of misleading information by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the introduction of the visa regime between Georgia and the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-80874 (E) 211200

Annex to the letter dated 20 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia is concerned by recent statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation which deliver misleading information to the international community regarding the visa regime between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

It is precisely in this context that one should view the statement by an official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation of 7 December 2000 (S/2000/1176), which is another attempt to justify certain actions of Russia with regard to the visa regime which violate internationally recognized principles.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia is authorized to declare that the Government of Georgia responded with understanding to the intention of the Russian Federation to introduce a visa regime between the two States and has never characterized it as "interference in the internal affairs of Georgia". At the same time, the Government of Georgia assumed that the visa regime was to be in full compliance with the norms of international law. The protests of Georgia were initially caused by violation on the part of Russia of this principle, which was manifested in a simplified border crossing on some segments of the State border between Georgia and the Russian Federation, in particular, those of the Abkhazia, Georgia and Tskhinvali regions only by the residents of these regions.

The argumentation given in the aforesaid statement of 7 December 2000 cannot but cause amazement, as if the maintenance of the former simplified regime on the above-mentioned segments of the border was feasible due to the situation in these territories and was destined "not to disrupt contacts between people and in order to promote cooperation in the border area".

The Government of Georgia re-emphasizes that the Russian side maintains a simplified border crossing with those territories that are temporarily out of the control of Georgia's central authorities. In these regions of Georgia, gross violations of human rights by separatist regimes have been taking place and the criminal situation has been grave due to, inter alia, widespread trafficking of arms and drugs. It is also noteworthy that groups of mercenaries have repeatedly entered the territory of Georgia from the Russian Federation through these very segments of the border to support separatist regimes. If the true sense of the introduction of a visa regime was to prevent the movement of terrorists and their accomplices, then intensified control over border crossings, logically, should have been introduced specifically for the area where separatist regimes predominate.

Subsequently, there are serious grounds for presuming that the unilateral introduction by the Russian side of a simplified border crossing on some segments of the State border between Georgia and the Russian Federation is an attempt to support apparently separatist regimes. Thus, we have to doubt the declaration by the Russian side of its "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia"

as well as its role of unbiased facilitator in the process of conflict resolution in Georgia.

Proceeding from this premise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia stresses that efficient efforts of the international community in promoting universally recognized principles and norms of international law are considered by Georgia as a major guarantee of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

19 December 2000